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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Spider-Man breaks box-office record
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Whip up a summer smoothie
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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

SHARKS

Discover amazing facts about these stealthy survivors of the seas p12

DID YOU KNOW?
Spain is the only European country with territories on mainland Africa and has two there: Ceuta and Melilla.

People in Ceuta after arriving from Morocco

Facts about Ceuta

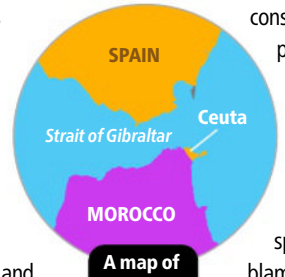
- **LOCATION:** About 10 miles from mainland Spain on the Mediterranean Sea and Strait of Gibraltar
- **SIZE:** 11.5 square miles
- **HISTORY WITH SPAIN:** Became a Spanish territory in1580
- **GOVERNMENT:** Self-ruling and part of Spain's parliament
- **MAIN LANGUAGES:** Spanish (official) and Arabic

Migrant crisis in Spanish territory

On July 30 and 31, tens of thousands of migrants who had been in Morocco entered Ceuta, a territory in Africa that is controlled by Spain. This caused a crisis at the border between the nations, and officials said it appears to have been one of the largest single-day unauthorized border crossings Europe has ever experienced.

What happened?

Ceuta is located on a small peninsula on the northern coast of Africa. It shares a land border with Morocco to the west and is otherwise surrounded by water. Typically, a few hundred migrants arrive in the city each day. But over two days, an estimated 70,000 people climbed over the border fence or swam about three miles from Morocco and scrambled up Ceuta's rocky shoreline. At least 75 people died. In the city, which has a population of about 85,000 people, migrants filled the streets and slept in parks and on sidewalks. Local authorities worked to manage the crowds while shops and businesses closed and residents stayed indoors. It is illegal to enter the territory this way, and authorities refused to provide most of the people with food or shelter and told them to leave. Within one day, more than 48,300 people returned to Morocco voluntarily.



A map of the area

Who were the migrants?

Most of the migrants were young Moroccan men, although some women, children, and people from other African countries were also among them. Many said they came looking for work due to a lack of jobs in Morocco, where unemployment rates are about 37% for people between ages 15 and 24. Ceuta is part of the European Union (EU, a group of 27 countries), which makes it an appealing arrival point for people hoping to find work in Europe.

Why did this happen?

Officials could not identify a single cause for the sudden surge, but they pointed to a mix of political tensions and misinformation. Pedro Sánchez, Spain's prime minister (similar to a President), is considered pro-immigration, and many people blamed his policies for the incident. Sánchez responded, however, that misinformation was to blame. He said false claims that anyone who arrived by sea would not immediately be sent back were spread on social media. Others blamed Morocco. Its authorities usually try to stop migrants from entering Ceuta, but in this case it was reported that Moroccan guards waved them through. Some people believe Morocco did this to punish Spain for forging closer ties with Algeria, a rival nation of Morocco's.

How did people react?

Juan Jesús Vivas, the head of Ceuta's government, said, "We are in a situation of total humanitarian and social emergency." He described the situation as "absolutely unsustainable" because local authorities do not have the resources to support tens of thousands of migrants. Sánchez called the mass crossing "a violation of Spain's territorial integrity" and traveled to Ceuta to address the situation in person. Morocco's ambassador to Spain, Karima Benyaich, said her country would "prefer legal, orderly, and safe immigration for everyone." One migrant told reporters he felt he was being used as a pawn in a political struggle between the governments of Spain and Morocco.

What will happen next?

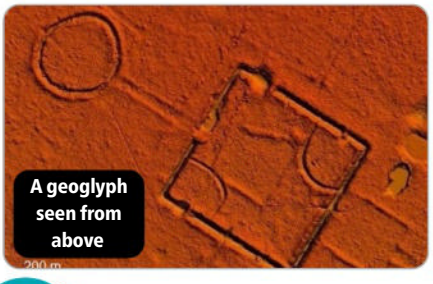
Spain deployed military and law enforcement to Ceuta, where a floating barrier was installed in the ocean to prevent further crossings. When *The Week Junior* went to press on August 5, about 2,000 migrants remained in Ceuta while authorities worked to determine their legal status, and officials were helping about 1,000 children who had arrived without an adult. Spanish officials said the government continues to support "safe, legal, and orderly migration" and called on the EU for a shared approach to managing migration. Those who returned to Morocco will grapple with the difficult conditions that drove them to attempt the crossing.

Ancient land art is discovered

Archaeologists (scientists who study objects left by people long ago) uncovered 396 designs carved into the earth in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Called geoglyphs, the geometric shapes consist of circles, squares, and other figures. They were created between 600 BCE and 850 CE.

To create the geoglyphs, ancient artisans most likely dug trenches and shaped mounds and embankments (slopes). The designs range in size from about seven acres to 120 acres each, with some trenches up to 30 feet wide and 15 feet deep. The shapes are hidden under the thick tree cover of the region, but researchers flew over the land and used laser scanning technology (called lidar) to spot them and create digital 3D maps.

Scientists think the geoglyphs were made by people from Aquiry, an ancient civilization with up to 3 million people. The findings contradict the idea that the area was uninhabited before Europeans arrived there in the 1400s. Experts think there could be anywhere from 23,000 to 30,000 geoglyphs yet to be discovered in the region.


A geoglyph seen from above

WOW! Elephants communicate using smell, sight, sound, touch, and vibrations that they can sense with their trunks and feet.

African elephants

World Elephant Day is marked

On August 12, World Elephant Day will draw attention to Asian and African elephants, whose populations are dwindling. Co-founded in 2012 by conservationist Patricia Sims and the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation of Thailand, the event is run by the World Elephant Society.

After major population declines, there are now about 350,000 African savanna elephants, 145,000 African forest elephants, and 50,000 Asian elephants left in the wild. African forest elephants are considered critically endangered, while the others are endangered. Elephants face serious threats from poaching (illegal hunting), loss of habitat, and conflicts with humans.

The theme of this year's World Elephant Day is "Be More Like Elephants," which asks people to celebrate and embody the qualities that make the animals extraordinary, including wisdom, empathy, and loyalty. People are asked to take steps including spreading awareness and signing a pledge to protect elephants.

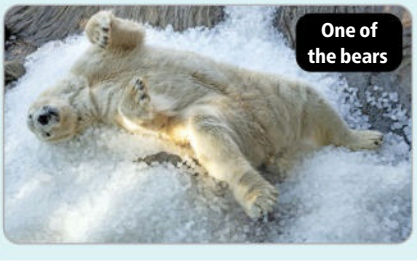
In Washington, DC, the Smithsonian's National Zoo is set to host EleFest, a three-day festival featuring yoga alongside the zoo's elephant herd, traditional Thai and South Indian dance performances, and elephant-themed story times. The Texas State Museum of Asian Cultures has organized an endangered animals scavenger hunt. Globally, a new "Join the Herd" campaign invites participants to walk any distance between August 9 and 15 in solidarity with Asian elephants.

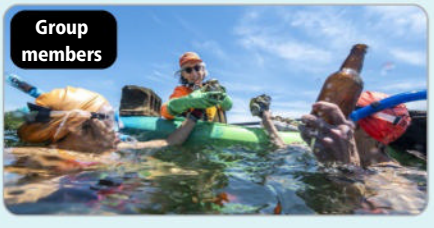
"World Elephant Day is a rallying call," said Sims, who is now president and executive director of the World Elephant Society.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

AN ICY TREAT

Polar bears at the Prague Zoo rolled around on 2.5 tons of ice cubes brought in to cool them off during a heat wave in the Czech Republic. The bears also took a dip in an ice bath and snacked on frozen squid.


One of the bears

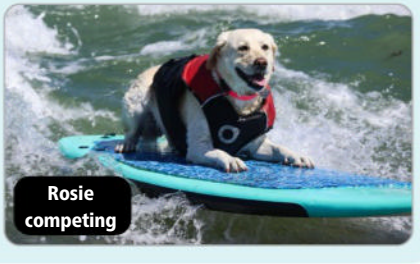

Group members

DIVING FOR TRASH

A group called Old Ladies Against Underwater Garbage has removed more than 6,000 pounds of trash from ponds in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Members in snorkel gear dive to the bottom and bring up empty bottles, old fishing rods, and car tires by hand. "It's the best feeling," one said.

CATCHING WAVES

The surf was up—and so were the tails—at the 10th annual World Dog Surfing Championships in California. Canine competitors were judged on wave size, ride length, technique, style, and confidence. Rosie, a 5-year-old yellow Labrador, took the top prize. "She's part of the ocean when she's out there," her owner said.


Rosie competing

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (2); ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE; MARVEL STUDIOS; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); M. PARSSINEN & F. DE NOVAES; REDUX; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

A LIFE OF SERVICE
The American Red Cross was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton, a nurse who was its president until 1904.

It takes about 10 minutes to collect blood from a donor.

Different blood types

The major blood groups are A, B, AB, and O, and each can be positive or negative. The most common type is O positive. If a person needs blood, the best type to receive is their own. But other types can often be used—particularly O negative. This is the universal blood type, which means that anyone can receive it.

Red Cross announces blood shortage

On July 27, the American Red Cross announced a shortage in the national blood supply. This is the second time the humanitarian organization has faced such a serious shortage in its 145-year history.

What happened?

The Red Cross provides nearly 40% of the nation's blood supply, collecting millions of donations from volunteers and delivering them to hospitals and trauma centers across the country. The supply dropped to a four-year low this summer, and by late July the Red Cross had less than one day's worth of blood to distribute. The nonprofit said it believed that extreme heat and poor air quality from wildfires were among the reasons people donated less than usual.

How do blood donations work?

A single blood donation, which is equal to about one pint, can save more than one person's life. When people sustain a major injury, they often require a transfusion of blood to replace what was lost. Patients in hospitals may also need extra blood during and after surgery. About 6.8 million people donate blood every year. Afterward, their blood is tested and stored in blood banks until hospitals, trauma centers, and disaster relief teams need it. Almost any healthy person who is age 18 or older (or age 16 or 17 with parental consent in many states) can donate blood.

Why is the shortage significant?

The only time the Red Cross has made a similar announcement was in January 2022, when the Covid pandemic, winter storms, and staffing problems disrupted its ability to collect enough blood. This summer's shortage has forced the Red Cross to limit the amount of blood it sends to hospitals, and officials said a lengthy shortage could delay trauma care and other treatments that require having extra blood on hand.

What will happen next?

After the Red Cross announced the shortage, tens of thousands of people signed up to give blood. The stockpile remains critically low, however. The organization said that if three additional donors attended every blood drive being held this summer, the nation's supply would be stabilized. To encourage donations, a $20 Amazon gift card is being offered to people who give blood in August.

WORD OF THE WEEK

GIRAFFE

The word "giraffe" comes from the Arabic word *zirāfah*, meaning "fast walker." However, a giraffe was first called a "camelopard" because people thought that a giraffe's long neck resembled that of a camel and its spotted skin made it look like a leopard.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

August 9, 2012
First woman officiates NFL game

On August 9, 2012, Shannon Eastin became the first woman to officiate a National Football League (NFL) game. She served as the line judge for the preseason opener between the Green Bay Packers and the San Diego Chargers. Previously, Eastin had officiated college football games. The hat she wore during the game is now part of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Shannon Eastin

Surveying the damage

Washington state faces fires

Wildfires in Washington have burned about 5,400 acres, destroying hundreds of buildings and causing more than 60,000 people to evacuate their homes. The cause of the fires, fueled by high winds and dry weather, is under investigation. Spokane mayor Lisa Brown said it was "the worst natural disaster" the area has faced. When *The Week Junior* went to press, firefighters were working to contain the blazes and no deaths had been reported.

Survey on school phone bans

According to a new survey by the Pew Research Center, support for bans on cellphone use by middle and high school students is strong. About 77% of adults favor phone-free classrooms, while 18% oppose them. About 48% of adults also support a "bell to bell" ban, which requires mobile devices to remain off for the entire school day, an increase from 36% in 2024.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day

Movie sets box-office record

Marvel's *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, released on July 31, shattered the record for the biggest domestic opening weekend of all time, earning about $360 million at the box office in North America. The previous record was $357 million, set by *Avengers: Endgame* in 2019. The film (rated PG-13) is the fourth in the most recent live-action franchise and features actor Tom Holland as Peter Parker.

A view of the Colorado River

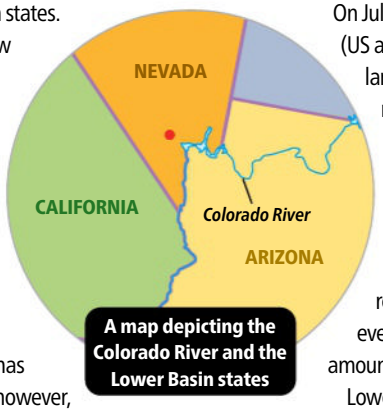
FACT FILE
The Colorado River is about 1,450 miles long and is the fifth-longest river in the US.

New plan for the Colorado River

The US government has released a new plan restricting how much water Arizona, California, and Nevada can use from the Colorado River. The river, an important environmental resource in the Southwest, is at risk of running dry.

Water from the Colorado River—as well as Lake Powell and Lake Mead, two reservoirs that are part of the river—generates electricity, among other uses, for people in seven states. These states are Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, known as the Upper Basin states, and California, Arizona, and Nevada, the Lower Basin states.

In 1922, the Upper Basin and Lower Basin states entered into the Colorado River Compact to share water. Too much water has been removed from the river, however, and its supply is shrinking. Lake Powell and Lake Mead have also reached historically low levels of water. These problems are expected to get worse as the planet warms due to climate change.



A map depicting the Colorado River and the Lower Basin states

The current agreement about how the Upper Basin and Lower Basin states share water from the river is set to expire in September, and the two sides haven't been able to agree to new terms. The Lower Basin states, which have larger populations and typically use more water, want all seven states to agree to mandatory cuts in water use, but the Upper Basin states haven't agreed to this plan.

On July 31, the Interior Department (US agency that conserves federal lands) released its own plan to manage the river. It calls for water restrictions of as much as 20% by Lower Basin states but doesn't require reductions in water use by Upper Basin states. The restrictions would be updated every two years based on the amount of water in the river.

Lower Basin officials said the plan would harm their people and businesses and that it's unfair that Upper Basin states don't have to cut back. Federal officials said they'll drop the plan if the states can reach an agreement on their own.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Security camera alerts Florida family to gator at the door" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (4); REUTERS; MATTHEW TOWERS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Around the world

The cleanup

St. Mary's, Canada
Eliminating a strong smell

Workers have begun cleaning out large tanks of fermented fish sauce to get rid of an unpleasant odor. The Atlantic Seafood Sauce Company closed its factory 20 years ago, leaving behind tanks containing about 330,000 gallons of sauce. Since then, residents of a nearby town say the smell has steadily worsened. Now the tanks are being drained, and peat moss is being used to soak up the last of the fishy liquid.

Morocco
Historic wins at soccer tournament

Malawi's national team achieved surprising success during its debut at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), a top soccer tournament taking place in Morocco from July 26–August 16. In its first-ever WAFCON match, Malawi upset the reigning champion, Nigeria, by a score of 3–2. Then Malawi knocked Egypt out of the competition with a 3–1 win. Teams that reach the semifinals will qualify for the 2027 Women's World Cup.

Keiko Fujimori (center)

Lima, Peru
President takes office after close race

Keiko Fujimori was sworn in as Peru's president on July 27 after narrowly beating her rival, Roberto Sánchez, in a June election. The result was so close that votes had to be recounted before the winner could be declared. Fujimori is the first woman to be elected president of Peru. She is the daughter of former president Alberto Fujimori, who served from 1990–2000.

Cappadocia, Turkey
Balloon festival held

Dozens of hot-air balloons filled the sky from July 30–August 2 at the Cappadocia Balloon Festival. The international event featured balloons of many colors and shapes, including a whale designed by sixth grader Bengi Serra Kaya, who won a design competition for children. Other whimsical balloon creations included a clown, a rocket, and a parrot.

Madrid, Spain
New climate panel

An expert panel has been created to advise Spanish policymakers on ways to address the harmful effects of climate change. For example, Spain is currently battling serious wildfires, which have affected thousands of people and cost billions of dollars to fight. On July 28, the Spanish government approved the creation of the advisory group, which will develop strategies to solve problems that could be caused by climate change in the future.

A firefighter in Spain

GETTY IMAGES (5); CONFEDERATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL; JANE THOMPSON; ALAMY (3)

Around the world

A player warming up

Damascus, Syria
Groundbreaking games

Syria is set to host its first National Paralympic Games on September 27. In advance of this milestone, the capital city, Damascus, hosted a soccer tournament for athletes with physical disabilities, including amputees (people who have lost limbs). The Damascus Governorate Club beat the Omayya Club in the final.

Malaysia
Stricter rules for hikers

Malaysia's government is introducing stricter hiking rules as an increasing number of adventurers have gotten lost and needed to be rescued. Guides say social media content has encouraged people to hike challenging routes too quickly and with inadequate gear, resulting in unsafe situations. The new rules require hikers to hire a guide in 189 high-risk locations and undergo thorough screenings before trying to climb mountains.

The island

Naoero
Country changes name

The island nation of Nauru, which is located in the South Pacific Ocean, has formally changed its name to Naoero. Pronounced "now-air-oh," it is the traditional name of the island in its native language. The government said the country became known as Nauru because it was easier for people from other places to pronounce. The island's people will now be known as dei-Naoero instead of Nauruan.

The book

Kiama, Australia
Library book returned after 150 years

Few library books stay checked out for as long as *Antiquities of Athens*, which was returned to the Kiama Library after 150 years. The book, published in 1858, was thought to be lost soon after the library opened in 1872. Local resident Ross Simmons found it in a fireplace while renovating his home. He probably won't have to pay the overdue book fine, which would be about $19,500.

Rome, Italy
Carriage proposal

On July 29, Italian lawmakers introduced a proposal to ban horse-drawn carriages in big cities. The carriages are common in Italy's tourist hotspots, especially Rome. Supporters of the plan say the practice is cruel to horses, which are not suited to working on modern roads or in very high temperatures. Others argue that it would be a shame to lose the carriages, which have been part of Italian culture for centuries.

Should kids have to make their bed every day?

Making the bed is a simple task, but some people say it's not worth doing.

What you need to know

- **A poll conducted by CivicScience found that 45% of people in the US make their bed every day, while 7% never make their bed.**
- **People who make their bed every morning are more likely to have a better night's rest, according to a poll by the National Sleep Foundation.**
- **An 80-year study by Harvard Medical School in Massachusetts found that there is a direct link between doing childhood chores and becoming a more successful adult.**

Nearly half of Americans make their bed every morning, according to one survey. People say it feels satisfying to make the bed and starts their day off right. Later at night, they also feel happy climbing into a neatly made bed. Other people, however, simply don't feel this way. Having an unmade bed doesn't bother them, and they're content to skip this morning ritual most days or always. They say they don't have time or don't see the point of straightening up bedding they'll just be messing up again later. Parents may insist kids make their bed, but is it a chore that children need to do? What do you think? Should kids have to make their bed every day?

Yes—it's a good start to the day

Everyone should make their bed. Even children as young as 4 years old are capable of learning how, according to experts. Making the bed teaches kids early in life to take care of their personal space. It also establishes a routine, which gives children a strong sense of self-discipline. Sure, making the bed may seem like a small undertaking, but it's something to be proud of. Getting it done can encourage someone to accomplish other tasks, like tidying a desk. When kids make their beds, they start the morning off right, with the satisfaction of completing something. With that feeling, they can face the day ready to take on anything.

No—kids have enough to worry about

Children already have numerous commitments between school, sports, and other activities. Asking a child to make their bed only adds more pressure and stress to their day. It's not worth it to begin the day arguing over whether the bed has been made or not. There are also better ways to help kids learn responsibility, like teaching them how to manage money. If children didn't have to worry about making their bed, they could use those few extra minutes for more sleep. Finally, it's not like anyone checks kids' bedrooms and grades them on their bed-making skills. There are more important things in life than a neatly made bed.

YES Three reasons kids should have to make their bed every day

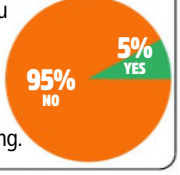
1. **Expecting kids to make their bed every day is a simple way to teach them to take care of their personal space.**
2. **Making the bed can motivate a person to accomplish other tasks, too.**
3. **Having a neatly made bed is a positive and satisfying way to start every day on the right foot.**

NO Three reasons kids should not have to make their bed every day

1. **Kids have enough worries in their day. They don't need to stress out about making a bed, too.**
2. **There are better ways to help kids learn about being responsible, such as teaching them about money.**
3. **Instead of making the bed, kids could use that time to get a little extra sleep.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if we should close the postal service. Your votes delivered a clear message: You want the US mail system to keep operating.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think kids should have to make their bed every day or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

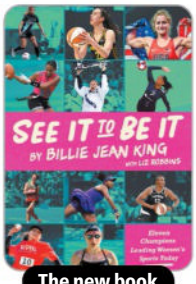
The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Inspiring future athletes

Tennis icon and activist Billie Jean King is a 39-time Grand Slam champion whose fight for equality changed her sport. Her new book, *See It to Be It: Eleven Champions Leading Women's Sports Today*, co-written with Liz Robbins, profiles athletes such as Naomi Osaka and Caitlin Clark. King spoke to *The Week Junior* about her life and career.

When did you start playing tennis?
In fifth grade. The local public park offered free tennis lessons, which made it possible for my family to afford them. After my first lesson, I knew I wanted to be the number one player in the world one day.



The new book

What inspired your activism?
Around age 12, I looked around my tennis club and didn't see any people of color or people with disabilities. From that moment, I dedicated my life to creating equal opportunities for everyone.

What is your proudest accomplishment?
I'm not done yet! Recently, I earned my degree from California State University, Los Angeles, 60 years after starting college. It's never too late to finish what you start.

What inspired *See It to Be It*?
Althea Gibson, the first Black player to win a major tennis championship, was my first role model. When I was a teenager, I saw her play and it inspired me to work harder. This book shares athletes' stories to show why it helps to "see it to be it."

What do you hope readers take away from it?
Every athlete featured faced challenges and was told they couldn't do something, but they persevered. I hope their determination will encourage readers to keep going.

Your best advice for young people?
You define yourself. Don't let others do it.

Billie Jean King

DID YOU KNOW?
Billie Jean King is the first female athlete to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

Young cricket star

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old from eastern India, has become the youngest male player to debut for India's national cricket team. Cricket is a bat and ball sport that is especially popular in India. Sooryavanshi, who began playing at age 4, also plays for the Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League. He made his international debut in July and quickly became the youngest player to score a half-century (50 runs) in international men's cricket. Sooryavanshi called playing for his national team "a dream fulfilled."

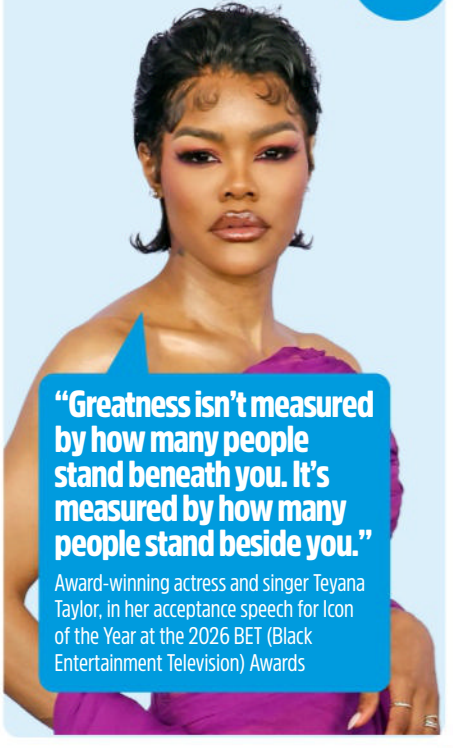
Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

Richard Delcid

A pizza champion

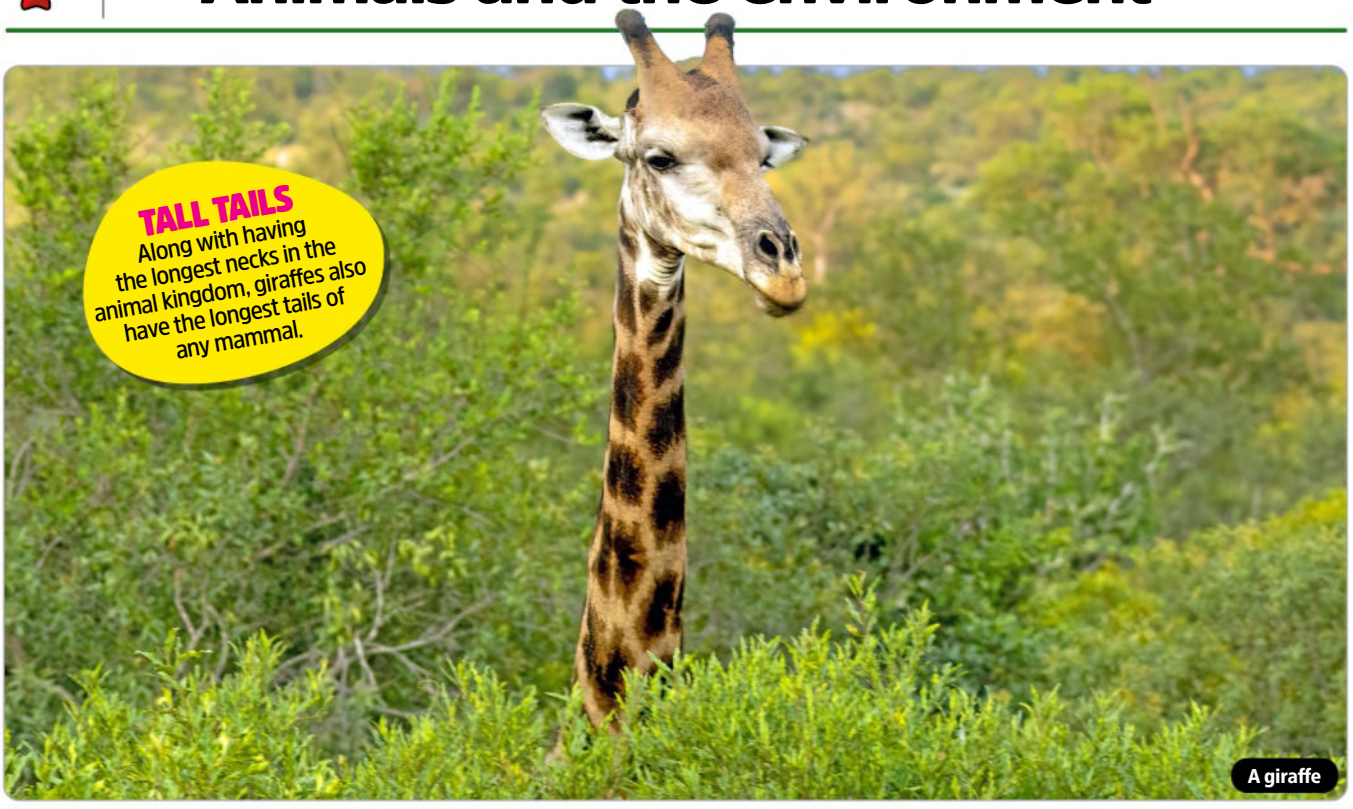
Richard Delcid, a Domino's general manager in Manassas, Virginia, was recently named the World's Fastest Pizza Maker after making three large pizzas in a record-breaking 31.22 seconds. He began working for Domino's in 2012 as a customer service representative before becoming a general manager in 2015. This was Delcid's third time entering the competition and first time winning. He was judged on his placement of dough, sauce, and toppings. "Years of hard work and practice went into this moment, and I'm incredibly proud," Delcid said.

OVERHEARD



"Greatness isn't measured by how many people stand beneath you. It's measured by how many people stand beside you."
Award-winning actress and singer Teyana Taylor, in her acceptance speech for Icon of the Year at the 2026 BET (Black Entertainment Television) Awards

GETTY IMAGES (3); BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER; COURTESY OF DOMINO'S PIZZA



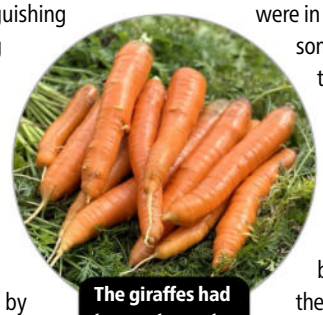
A giraffe

Study shows giraffes are good at math

With their long necks and prominent spots, giraffes are distinctive mammals. But a new study has found that they have another unusual quality that's not immediately visible to onlookers—they are good at crunching numbers.

Giraffes are ungulates, a group that also includes camels, hippos, and deer. All these animals have previously displayed some skill for mathematics, such as distinguishing between more and less or doing simple calculations of amounts.

For the new study, researchers tested four giraffes from the Barcelona Zoo in Spain. They tapped into the giraffes' love for carrots, offering the animals an opportunity to eat more carrots by selecting among containers that held different numbers of the crunchy snacks.


The giraffes had to count carrots.

In one test, they used three solid-colored containers: two yellow and one green. One yellow container held two carrots inside it, the other had three carrots, and the green container had two carrots. After showing the contents of all the containers to a giraffe named Nuru, the researcher transferred two carrots from the green container to the yellow container that had previously held two carrots. This container now held four carrots, while the other yellow container still held three. Nuru was then allowed to select one of the yellow containers, and she correctly chose the one with four carrots.

To pick the container that held more food, the giraffe had to remember how many carrots were in each container and perform some version of addition. Two of the giraffes, Nuru and Njano, got it right most of the time. The other two giraffes simply chose whichever container the researcher touched last.

For many years, it was believed that only humans had the ability to use mathematical thinking. But now many animals have proved that idea wrong (see box at right). Researchers still aren't sure why Nuru and Njano seemed to be able to count the carrots while their companions did not. Just as some humans are especially good at math, some giraffes could be better than others. Experts say this finding helps paint a more complete picture of how these abilities may have developed in animals.

Animals that can count

Creatures of all sizes—including chickens (above), dogs, and stingrays—have shown mathematical abilities. While animals may not do math the same way humans do, many understand the concept of quantity, which can help them obtain the most possible food. For instance, golden orb weaver spiders count how many insects are caught in their webs and will search for any prey that goes missing.

Math can serve other purposes as well. Honeybees count landmarks to remember routes, and lionesses count the roars from an approaching pride to decide whether to attack or retreat. Male Túngara frogs duel by emitting one more "chuck" sound than their opponent with each call until they can't add on any more.

MIGHTY MOUSE
Most mice can swim, climb, and jump as high as 1.5 feet in the air.

An Andean leaf-eared mouse

How some mice live the high life

Andean leaf-eared mice can live on the summits of volcanoes up to 22,000 feet above sea level. At that incredible height, temperatures are freezing and there is little oxygen or food. Scientists recently analyzed how some of these mice evolved (changed very slowly over time) to survive at a higher elevation than any other known mammal.

The study compared mice that live at high elevations to those that live at lower levels. It found that the muscle cells of a high-altitude mouse are similar to those of a marathon runner. They are packed with structures called mitochondria, which can efficiently convert nutrients into energy. The mouse's body uses the energy to shiver and produce heat.

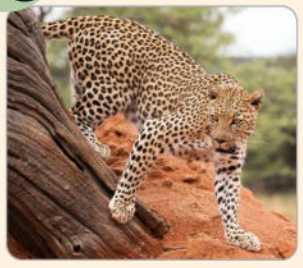
Mice at high elevations can also digest plant substances that are toxic to other animals. This helps them make the most of limited food sources. "Evolution never ceases to surprise us as biologists," said study co-author Grant McClelland. Even in the harshest conditions, he said, some living things have "found a way to survive and thrive in that environment."

Animal of the week: Puerto Rican crested toad

Experts in Chicago, Illinois, have been breeding Puerto Rican crested toads to ship to Puerto Rico for release. The endangered species, known locally as the *sapo concho*, is the island's only native toad. More than 12,000 tadpoles have been sent so far.

- **LIFESPAN:** About 10 years
- **HABITAT:** Forests in Puerto Rico
- **SIZE:** Between 2.5 and 4.75 inches
- **DIET:** Insects
- **FUN FACT:** They spend most of the year in an underground burrow, such as a spider's or a crab's!

Good week / Bad week



West African leopards

A recent study done in Pendjari National Park in Benin showed a rise in the population density (number of animals in a given area) of West African leopards. This success may be a result of habitat restoration, work with local people, and less hunting.

Colorful birds

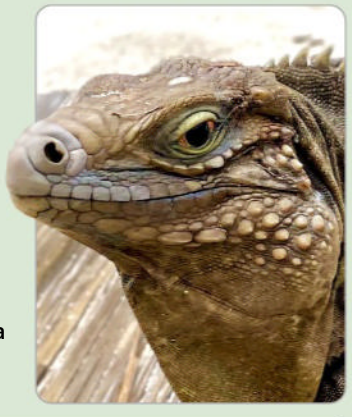
According to a research team, data suggests that colorful songbirds face a greater risk of extinction than birds that are less colorful. The reasons are still unclear, but one factor could be that colorful birds are often captured and sold as pets.

MARCIAL QUIROGA-CARMONA; GETTY IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

ASK AN EXPERT: "Why do iguanas have a third eye on their head?"

Caroline, 8, Texas

Jeff Bocek
Animal care expert,
Brookfield Zoo Chicago



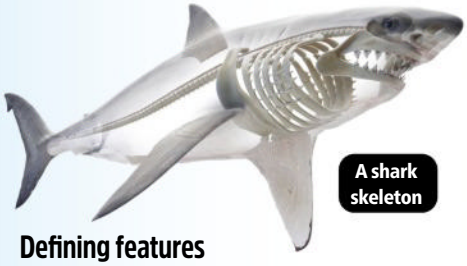
An iguana's third eye is truly remarkable! This small eye appears as a tiny dot on the iguana's head. Unlike typical eyes, it doesn't see images. Instead, it senses light and darkness. It also helps an iguana navigate, detect predators, and regulate its body temperature.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Brookfield Zoo Chicago at brookfieldzoo.org.

Amazing survivors

Get to know more about these silent and stealthy hunters.

There are more than 500 species of sharks living in oceans all over the world, in habitats ranging from coral reefs to the deep sea.



A shark skeleton

Defining features

Sharks are a type of fish that have skeletons made of cartilage. Because this substance is lighter than bone, sharks can swim far and fast using less energy. Another reason sharks can swim quickly is that their skin is made of millions of V-shaped scales that water flows over easily. Other traits include a powerful sense of smell and several rows of teeth, which sharks lose and replace thousands of times over their lives. Sharks can also detect the Earth's electromagnetic field, which helps them navigate through the water.

The jaws of a megalodon

A long history

Sharks first appeared about 400 million years ago, long before dinosaurs. Since then, sharks have survived several major extinction events. A number of new shark species appeared 360 to 286 million years ago, a time referred to as the Golden Age of Sharks. The most well-known extinct shark may be the megalodon, which lived 23 to 3.6 million years ago. At about 60 feet long—three times the size of a great white—the megalodon was the largest shark to ever exist.

CHOMP, CHOMP
Sharks have been known to eat license plates, tires, and even a full suit of armor.

GOING STRONG
Some shark species—like the great white—have to keep swimming nonstop in order to breathe.

Shark relatives

Sharks are part of a broader group of fish called Chondrichthyes, all of which have skeletons made of cartilage. Here are a few examples.

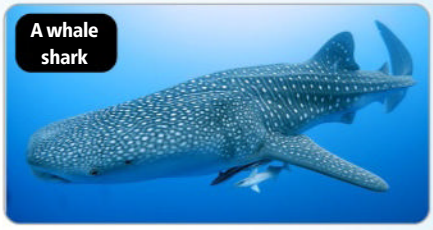
Rays

There are more than 500 species of rays, which include the manta ray (left), electric ray, and sting ray. Rays typically have flat bodies shaped like diamonds and wide fins that look like wings. The giant manta ray is the largest species, with a wingspan up to 26 feet wide.

GETTY IMAGES (7); ALAMY

of the ocean

A great white shark


A whale shark

A diverse species

Sharks vary in size from dwarf lantern sharks, which are smaller than a human hand, to whale sharks, which can grow up to 60 feet long. Although sharks have a wide-ranging diet, they eat mostly meat and plants. Some sharks feed on plankton—basking sharks, for example, swim slowly with their mouths wide open to catch the tiny organisms. The largest known predatory fish in the world is the great white shark, which grows up to about 20 feet long and weighs more than 4,000 pounds. Wobbegong sharks, which are also known as "carpet sharks" because of the ornate patterns on their bodies, use their natural camouflage to blend into the ocean floor, where they lie motionless to capture passing prey. Meanwhile, epaulette sharks use their paddle-like fins to walk along reefs, the seafloor, and even on land. Greenland sharks are among the longest-living animals in the world—they can survive for more than 500 years.

A great hammerhead

Misunderstood predators

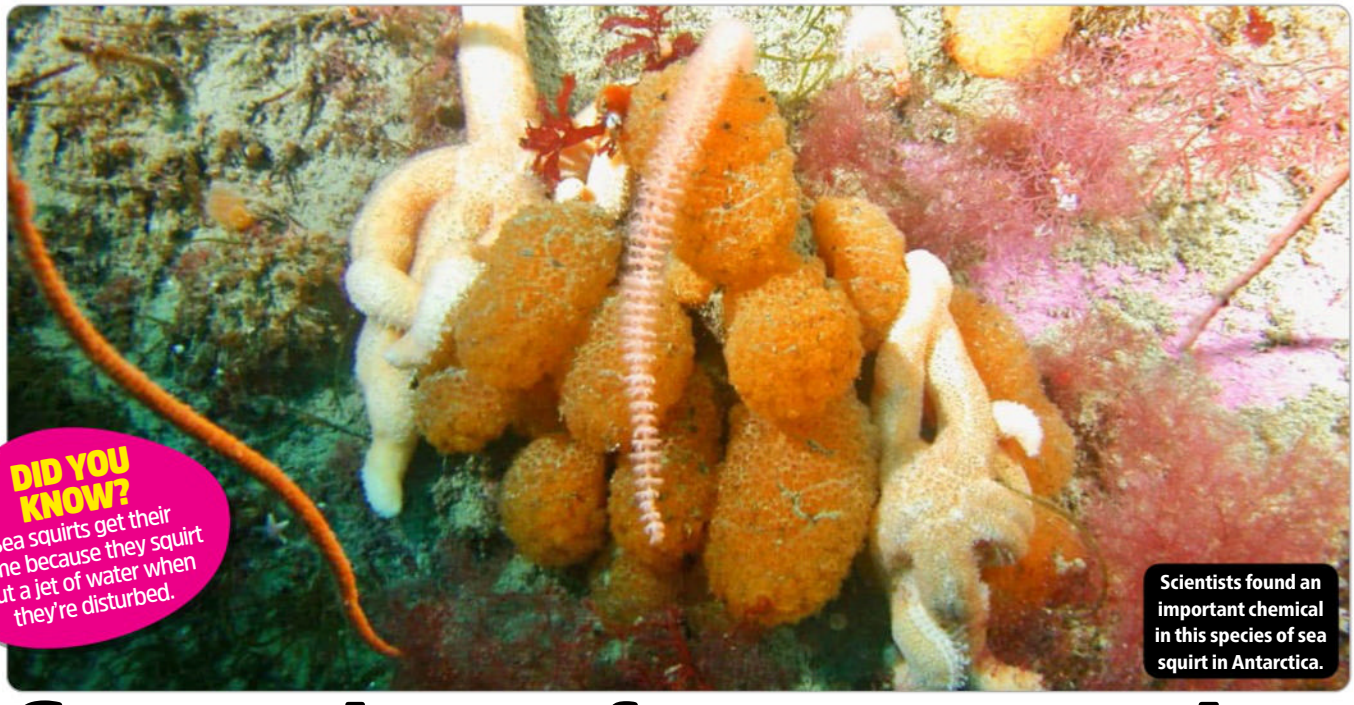
Sharks are among the top predators in the ocean and help to keep populations of other ocean animals under control. They do not naturally feed on humans, and unprovoked attacks on people are incredibly rare. However, humans kill millions of sharks a year through overfishing, whether they are caught deliberately or in fishing nets accidentally. Several shark species, including the great hammerhead and oceanic whitetip, have been classified as critically endangered. Protecting these animals requires limiting how many sharks can be fished, banning practices that encourage illegal shark fishing, and setting up shark sanctuaries where fishing is not allowed.

Skates

These fish resemble rays but are smaller—the biggest skates are about 8 feet long. Skates (like the thornback skate, left) also have shorter, stockier tails than most rays and thorny features to deter predators. Another difference: Rays give birth to live young, and skates lay eggs.

Sawfish

Although its body looks like a shark, the sawfish (left) is a kind of ray. Two sawfish species, the smalltooth and the largetooth, have been found off the coast of the US, but only the smalltooth is confirmed to still be there today. Sawfish can use their snouts to catch prey or to dig for food.



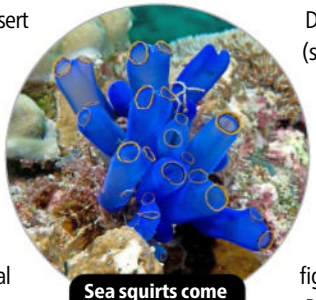
DID YOU KNOW?
Sea squirts get their name because they squirt out a jet of water when they're disturbed.

Scientists found an important chemical in this species of sea squirt in Antarctica.

Cancer hope from sea squirts

Small sea creatures living in a part of Antarctica could one day help scientists develop a new treatment for melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer. Cancer is a group of diseases caused by cells growing out of control. About 112,000 cases of melanoma are diagnosed in the US every year, and the disease can be deadly if untreated.

A group of researchers from the University of South Florida, the Desert Research Institute in Nevada, and Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico recently analyzed a species of sea squirt, called Synoicum adareanum. They found that the creature contains bacteria that produce Palmerolide A, a powerful chemical that can kill melanoma cells while causing little harm to healthy cells.



Sea squirts come in many colors.

The finding is significant because many cancer treatments—like chemotherapy (which uses strong medicine to kill cancer cells) and radiation (a type of x-ray treatment)—can also damage healthy cells. This often causes unpleasant side effects for patients, so scientists are working to find less invasive approaches. "You want to treat the disease without harming the patient," said Bill Baker, a leader of the study.

Sea squirts are invertebrates (animals without a backbone) that usually live on rocks. Synoicum adareanum is shaped like a little potato with holes in it. The species has spent millions of years adapting to the freezing temperatures of Antarctica. To survive extreme conditions, many marine animals produce chemical defenses, like bacteria, that protect them from predators.

During a six-week expedition (see box at right), the scientists searched the area for Synoicum adareanum to see how widespread they are. Now they will continue studying how the bacteria inside the creatures makes the cancer-fighting substance.

Developing a melanoma treatment based on Palmerolide A will require more of the substance than can be collected from sea squirts. The team's first step will be to figure out how to create an artificial version of it in large quantities in the lab. The process of creating the medicine could take years.

Still, the researchers are excited about their recent progress. "This is a beautiful example of how nature is the best chemist out there," said Alison Murray, the study's lead author.

A challenging expedition

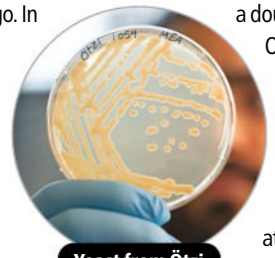
Researchers on a dive

Synoicum adareanum exists only in Antarctica, where it has adapted over millions of years to survive in that specific environment. To seek out the sea squirts, scientists had to undertake an expedition with challenges that involved more than freezing temperatures. "In Antarctica, you're dealing with ice, leopard seals, changing seas, and sometimes very limited visibility," Ben Meister, the expedition's diving safety officer, told *The Guardian*.

To reach the creatures, the team had to dive down as far as 131 feet for up to half an hour at a time. Some areas were so deep they used remote-controlled underwater vehicles to explore them. "Every dive must be carefully planned to balance getting the work done while keeping everyone safe," said Meister.

Loaf of bread made from ancient yeast

Scientists baked a loaf of sourdough bread using yeast that is more than 5,000 years old. Yeast is a type of fungus that is often used in baking. The ancient yeast was found on the mummified body of Ötzi the Iceman, a human who lived about 5,300 years ago. In 1991, his body was found by hikers in the Alps mountains. Scientists have spent years studying his remains to learn more about life in prehistoric Europe.



Yeast from Ötzi

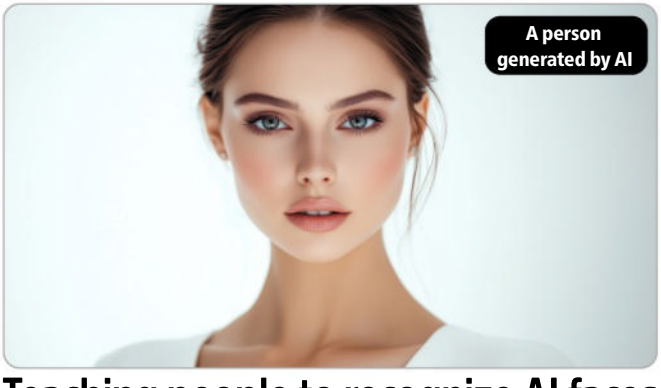
In a recent study, researchers examined the micro-organisms (tiny living things) found on and inside Ötzi's body to see if they were still active. The team found four types of yeast, which are thought to have come from the ice where he lay frozen for thousands of years. Yeast usually needs a warm environment to stay active, but these types had adapted to the icy conditions and were still active.

Scientists used one of the yeasts to make sourdough bread. When yeast is mixed with flour and water, it creates a dough that rises (expands). Once the dough has doubled in size, it is baked in the oven. At first, the iceman yeast didn't help the loaf to rise, but after a few attempts the team created a dough that rose.

Mohamed Sarhan, who led the research, said he'd never baked bread before so "the result definitely had some room for improvement." He added that finding a yeast that stays active in cold conditions could inspire new ways to make certain foods.

FULL OF FUNGI
There are currently more than 2,000 known species of yeast, but scientists think there could be 100 times as many.

A model of what Ötzi the Iceman could have looked like



A person generated by AI

Teaching people to recognize AI faces

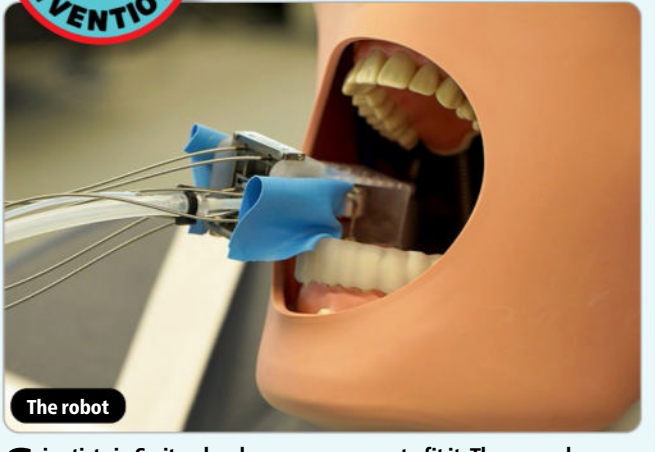
Artificial intelligence (AI, when a computer imitates human learning) is getting better at creating images that look like real people, making it harder to see that they're AI. But it's important to be able to tell the difference to avoid being tricked or scammed. So scientists have created a new way to train people to recognize AI faces.

AI-generated faces tend to be more symmetrical but less expressive than real faces. For the training, researchers showed test subjects about 100 photos of people. They told the subjects which faces were real and which were AI. The scientists asked them to rate the faces on qualities including symmetry, expressiveness, and distinctiveness.

Subjects were also shown three faces and asked to guess which one was AI. The subjects guessed correctly about 40% of the time before training but about 80% of the time afterward. The researchers said their teaching method can be made available online for a low cost.

AMAZING INVENTION

Mini robot that does dental work



The robot

Scientists in Switzerland are designing a robot that could one day prepare teeth for dental work. When patients have a cavity and need a crown (cap for a damaged tooth), dentists have to remove any decay, smooth and fill the tooth, take an impression of it, and order a crown to fit it. The procedure typically requires several visits.

The small robot, which fits in a person's mouth, follows a scan of the tooth to perform the first few steps at once, saving everyone time. Scientists want to add sensors and a camera to make the robot more precise.

EURAC RESEARCH/ANDREA DE GIOVANNI; GETTY IMAGES; ADOBE STOCK; UNIVERSITY OF BASEL/CATHERINE MEYER; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); SAM AFOULOUSS/UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Photos of the week

SHARE THE EXPERIENCE CONTEST WINNERS

Walk in the woods
Nina Mayer Ritchie took this picture of her son in the Grand Mesa National Forest.

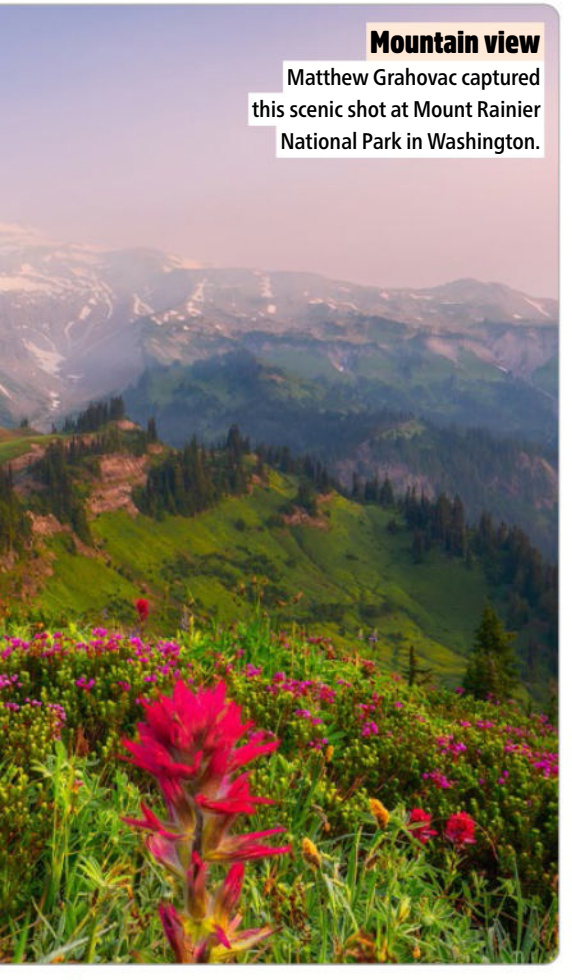
Perfect pair
In Alaska's Kenai Fjords National Park, Jaime Wright snapped sea otters near a glacier.

DANIEL CRAIG; JAIME WRIGHT; MATTHEW GRAHOVAC; JEAN ZUO; NINA MAYER RITCHIE; JONATAS NEIVA

Photos of the week

Nature's beauty
Jonatas Neiva's image of Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest won the top prize.

Home on the range
A bison strolls in Grand Teton National Park in this photo taken by Danielle Craig.



Mountain view
Matthew Grahovac captured this scenic shot at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington.

Warm glow
Jean Zuo photographed the Yosemite Valley Chapel, which was built in 1879.

LIVING LEGEND
The WPBL mascot, Maybelle, was designed to look like professional women's baseball icon Maybelle Blair.

The Los Angeles Queens

Successful start to WPBL season

The WPBL (Women's Professional Baseball League) made its debut in Springfield, Illinois, on August 1 with a game between the Los Angeles Queens and the New York Heights. It was the first pro women's baseball game in the US in more than 70 years. In front of a sold-out crowd at Robin Roberts Stadium, the Queens rallied from behind to defeat the Heights, 10–8.

The WPBL is the first pro women's baseball league in the US since the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League ended in 1954. The four teams competing in the inaugural season are the Queens, the Heights, the San Francisco Firebells, and the Boston Hunters. Their players come from 11 countries, and they are a mix of experienced national team members, former college athletes, and rising young stars. They were drafted from a pool of more than 150 athletes.

Kelsie Whitmore

The league's first overall draft pick was Kelsie Whitmore, who is on the Firebells. She made history in recent years by playing pro ball on men's teams. Other big-name stars include Queens pitcher Mo'ne Davis, who became famous in 2014 when she pitched in the Little League Baseball World Series, and Ayami Soto, a player from Japan who is widely considered one of the greatest women's baseball pitchers ever.

The contest between the Queens and Heights was a thriller from the start. In the top of the first inning, the Queens took the lead after a two-run double by Maggie Foxx. Davis scored the league's first run. New York had five runs in the bottom of the first, then went up 7–2 in the second. Entering the seventh inning (unless there is a tie, WPBL games are seven innings long), the Queens were down, 8–6, but rallied for four runs and a remarkable comeback victory.

The next day, the Firebells beat the Hunters, 11–3, scoring seven runs in the third. Amanda Gianelloni led the Firebells with three hits and three runs batted in.

During the regular season, each team will play 15 games. After that, they will pair off to compete in the best-of-three-game semifinals. The two semifinal winners advance to the finals, a best-of-five series beginning on September 16. Every WPBL game will be held in Springfield, a city that hosted one of the first ticketed women's baseball games in 1875.

US women's baseball team shines

The USA Baseball Women's National Team (above) has advanced to the 2027 Women's Baseball World Cup Finals, which will be held near Rockford, Illinois, next July.

The team qualified by winning all five of their recent group stage games in the same Illinois location. They scored more than 20 runs in each game and hit a total of 13 homers. Ashton Lansdell was named Most Outstanding Player for the US. Australia and Canada also made the finals.

This month in Taiwan, there will be a group stage competition featuring Cuba, Venezuela, the Philippines, Great Britain, Chinese Taipei, and seven-time World Cup champion Japan.

STAR PLAYER
US soccer legend Landon Donovan played in 12 MLS All-Star Games during his career, a league record.
Son Heung-Min

Exciting win for MLS All-Stars

On July 29, the best players from Major League Soccer (MLS) faced the top players from Mexico's Liga MX in the 2026 MLS All-Star Game at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina. The MLS team won, 4–3, marking their second straight win over Liga MX and fourth victory in their five All-Star meetings since 2021.

The MLS All-Star roster had 29 players chosen through a mix of fan, player, and media voting; coaching staff selections; and picks by the league commissioner. Thirteen of the MLS All-Stars had played in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including New York City FC's Matt Freese and Charlotte FC's Tim Ream (both from the US team), Orlando City's Maxime Crépeau and Toronto FC's Richie Laryea (Canada), FC Dallas' Petar Musa (Croatia), and LAFC's Son Heung-Min (South Korea). Lionel Messi and Rodrigo De Paul of Inter Miami were also named All-Stars, but since they recently played for Argentina in the World Cup final, they were allowed to skip the match and rest.

Nine minutes into the All-Star game, Liga MX player Luis Gabriel Rey (Chivas Guadalajara) headed in the opening goal following a free kick. Then Son took control for MLS and scored twice in four minutes to give his team a 2–1 lead. Philip Zinckernagel (Chicago Fire) extended the lead to 3–1 just before the halftime break.

Liga MX's Salomon Rondon (CF Pachuca) scored early in the second half, then Evander (he uses one name and plays for FC Cincinnati) scored for MLS three minutes later. Jose Paradela (Cruz Azul) made Liga MX's third goal. After the match, Son was named the Most Valuable Player.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Wendy Casiano**

Team: **El Teatro Rodante Hispánico (ETRH)**

"Wendy is an outstanding dance coach and dance mom. Every Saturday, I look forward to her smile and the diverse dances she teaches us from Hispanic countries. Even though this is my first year, ETRH is my second home. Wendy gives us compliments and critical feedback so we can become awesome dancers. Before a show, she tells us to dance with love and passion. She deserves to be honored and celebrated." Havana, 11, New York

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

MORE BIG MOMENTS

BASEBALL

In a trade with the Detroit Tigers on August 1, the Los Angeles Dodgers—a top MLB team seeking to win a third-straight World Series—acquired Tarik Skubal, the American League's best pitcher in 2024 and 2025. He made a solid debut on August 4 (above) with six strikeouts, but the Dodgers lost to the Chicago Cubs, 5–1.

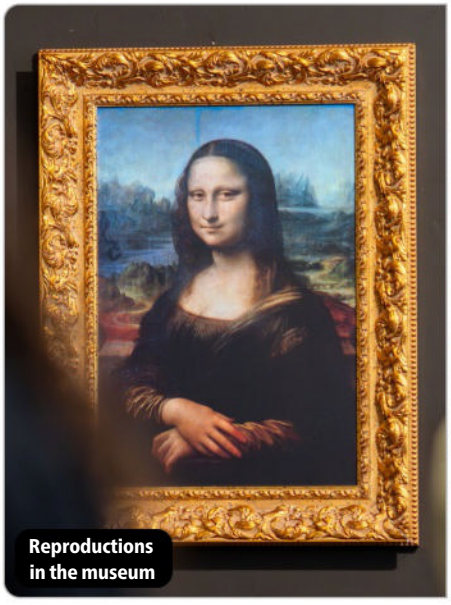
LACROSSE

The US beat Canada, 16–4, in the final of the 2026 World Lacrosse Women's Championship in Tokyo, Japan, on August 2. It is the US team's fifth straight gold. Ally Kennedy, who had 10 goals and six assists in the match, was named the Most Valuable Player for the US. Goalkeeper Shea Dolce made eight saves for the US in the final.

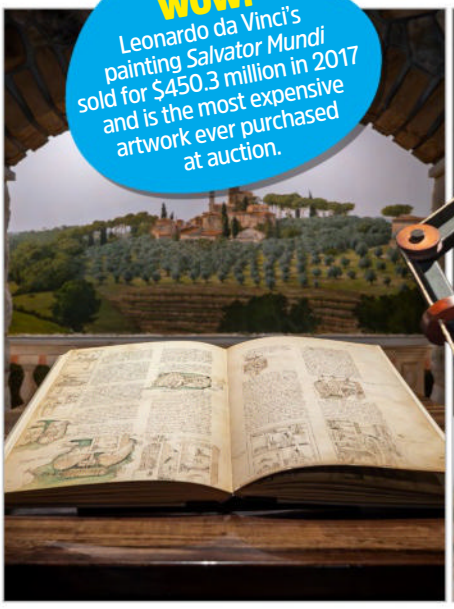
BASKETBALL

In the WNBA, Chicago Sky rookie Sydney Taylor hit a last-second 3-point shot to give her team an 84–83 victory over the Las Vegas Aces on August 1. She scored 29 points in the win, her fifth game with at least 25 points this season. Taylor signed with the Sky after not being picked by any team during the WNBA Draft this spring.

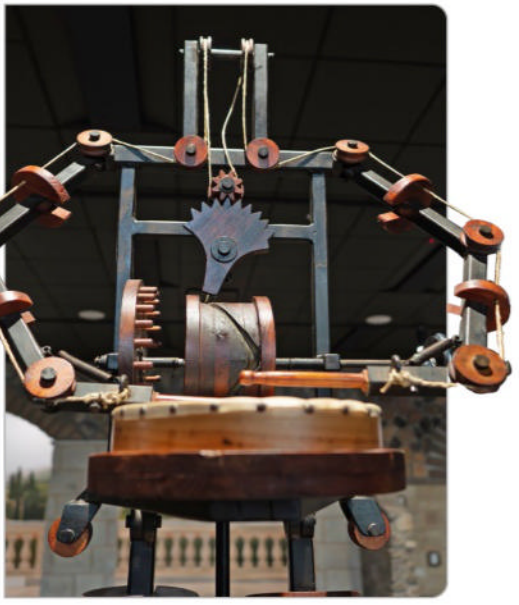
GETTY IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)



Reproductions in the museum



WOW! Leonardo da Vinci's painting *Salvator Mundi* sold for $450.3 million in 2017 and is the most expensive artwork ever purchased at auction.



Leonardo da Vinci museum opens

A new museum in Colorado explores the work of the renowned 15th-century innovator.

Many people know Leonardo da Vinci as the Italian artist who painted the famous portrait the *Mona Lisa*, but he was also a brilliant inventor and engineer during his lifetime (1452–1519). His ideas continue to influence the way people think today, and visitors to the recently opened Leonardo da Vinci Museum of North America & STEAM Center in Pueblo, Colorado, can learn more about how he combined science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM).

Rather than simply displaying Leonardo's paintings and drawings, the museum created interactive exhibits with working models of his inventions. They help highlight how he approached problems through testing, observations, and experimentation. Adrianne Hamilton, the museum's director of education, told *The Week Junior* that Leonardo was a tinkerer who "didn't mind failing."

The museum

The museum's galleries are divided by subject matter. In one that focuses on civil machines (inventions to help people work), visitors can spin gears, test locking mechanisms, and check out a wood and metal robot drummer (above right) that can beat a drum with the turn of a hand crank. A section devoted to flight features several versions of Leonardo's ideas for flying machines, including his "aerial screw." He imagined it spinning to create lift and help the machine rise, a concept that is somewhat similar to a helicopter. Other items on display include underwater breathing equipment Leonardo thought could help soldiers.

The machine replicas were created by Artisans of Florence, a group in Italy that specializes in rebuilding Leonardo's inventions from his original notebooks and sketches. The inventions are handcrafted using materials that would have been available during his life.

Reproductions of some of his paintings, including the *Mona Lisa* (above left) and *The Last Supper*, are also displayed. The paintings help explain how his studies of anatomy, light, and optics shaped his art. Visitors can also explore reproductions of Leonardo's notebooks (above center).

After the galleries, visitors reach the STEAM Center, which includes an Inventor Lab, Testing Lab, and Tech Lab. The Testing Lab has STEAM exhibitions such as a sand table and a drone obstacle course. Hamilton hopes the overall experience at the museum leaves people feeling inspired to work the way Leonardo worked. "Allow yourself to follow your creative impulses and not be afraid to fail," she said. "That is where true creativity and true innovation lie."

A passion for curiosity

Leonardo da Vinci (above) was born in a small town near Vinci in central Italy. He rose to fame during the Italian Renaissance, a period between the 1300s and 1600s when artists, scientists, and thinkers explored new ideas about the world. He is considered a polymath, a person who develops knowledge and skills across many different subjects. Adrianne Hamilton, director of education at the Leonardo da Vinci Museum of North America, told *The Week Junior* that Leonardo believed "everything is connected to everything else."

One subject he studied carefully was the human body. Leonardo even dissected bodies of people who had died in order to understand how body parts functioned. His sketches of human anatomy were very precise and have been exhibited next to modern scans to show how close he was to getting the details right.

Bad Bunny with his Grammy Awards in February

New categories for music awards

The Recording Academy has announced that it will add five categories to the Grammy Awards, a top honor in music. Starting in 2027, new awards will recognize achievements in Asian pop, Latin music, R&B, folk, and traditional pop. Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr. said the changes were inspired by the music community's desire for "more opportunities to celebrate different and new genres of music."

One of the new awards will be Best Latin Song. To be nominated, more than half of a song's lyrics must be in Spanish. The addition will arrive a year after Bad Bunny's album *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* became the first all-Spanish-language album to win the Grammy for Album of the Year.

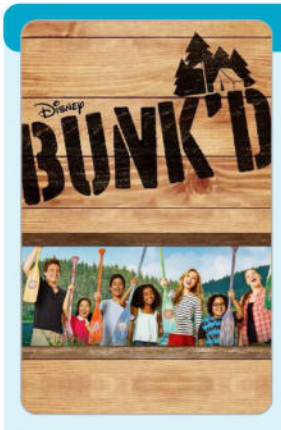
The popularity of K-pop music from South Korea is also reflected in the changes. In 2025, the *KPop Demon Hunters* soundtrack became one of the most streamed albums globally. At the Grammys, the film's song "Golden" was named Best Song Written for Visual Media. It is the first K-pop song to win a Grammy. Going forward, a Best Asian Pop Music Performance category will recognize music from across Asia, including K-pop, J-pop (from Japan), and C-pop (from Chinese-speaking areas).

DID YOU KNOW?
The K-pop genre began in 1992 when the group Seo Taiji and Boys blended rap, rock, and electronic music with Korean lyrics.

The other new awards will honor an R&B collaboration or duo/group performance, a traditional pop vocal performance, and a traditional folk album. The Academy also updated the Best New Artist rules, allowing nominees to be considered up to four times.

Mason Jr. called it "an exciting time in music" and added, "We've built on what we've done over the last 68 years and will continue to do so."

READER RECOMMENDS



Bunk'd *(Disney+, Netflix)*

"This TV show is about kids who attend a quirky summer camp called Camp Kikiwaka in Maine in the first five seasons, and Kikiwaka Ranch in Wyoming in the last two. The episodes are filled with funny situations, such as a surprise party ruined by a moose, mosquitoes swarming the camp, getting stuck on a ski lift, and a bouncy house drifting across the lake. I love the unique personalities and connections between the campers, counselors in training (CITs), and counselors. I would recommend this show to everyone." Lucy, 9, Minnesota

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

WATCH: WIZARDS BEYOND WAVERLY PLACE

This comedy series about a magical family, the Russos, and a young wizard in their care, Billie, is ending with a four-part finale. As Billie handles issues related to her parents, the Russos team up to defeat an evil threat. Selena Gomez will return as wizard Alex Russo. (Disney+, Disney Channel)

PLAY: MECCHA CHAMELEON

Jace, an 11-year-old reader of *The Week Junior*, recommends this multiplayer hide-and-seek game. Hiders paint their character to match a room, then freeze in place while seekers hunt for anything that looks out of place. Every round is a race against the clock to stay hidden until time runs out. (Steam)

WATCH: SIX: THE MUSICAL LIVE!

A recording of a performance of the award-winning musical *Six*, featuring cast members from the original London production, is coming to the big screen. The show is about the six wives of King Henry VIII, who ruled England from 1509 to 1547. The women are reimagined as pop stars and tell their stories through song. (In theaters August 14)

GETTY IMAGES; DISNEY; DISNEY/JUSTIN STEPHENS; LEMORION; FOCUS FEATURES; ON LEFT PAGE: LEONARDO DA VINCI MUSEUM OF NORTH AMERICA AND STEAM CENTER (4); GETTY IMAGES

Book club

THIS WEEK'S BOOK

Diamond Fever!

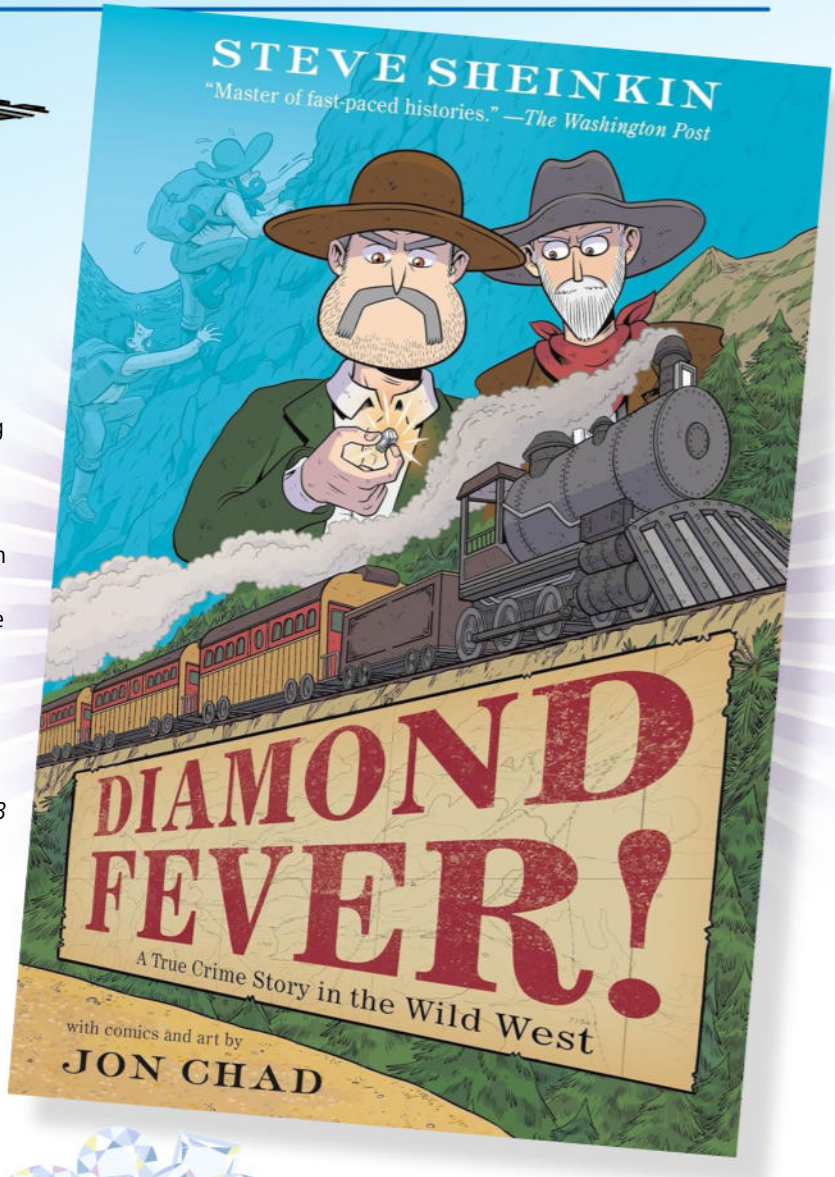
By Steve Sheinkin, illustrated by Jon Chad

This nonfiction adventure with nonstop excitement takes place in the 1870s, a time when the Wild West was being explored. Prospectors Philip Arnold and John Slack, who are cousins from Kentucky, head to the San Francisco office of George Roberts, an investor in gold and silver. They ask him to hold a valuable bag of stones for them overnight but not tell anyone about it.

Twelve hours later, that promise is broken. Roberts brings the bag to jewelers who confirm that the bag contains "rough diamonds" (diamonds that aren't yet cut or polished). He thinks the prospectors have found the first diamond mine in the Wild West.

Almost two years pass before Arnold and Slack reveal the location of their mine, and diamond fever has swept the land by then. Many prospectors are trying to get to the mine before greedy bankers arrive first and grab everything for themselves. Arnold and Slack finally reveal the location on a rugged stretch of land along the Colorado-Wyoming border. An inspector declares that the mine is legitimate. But is it really an elaborate hoax?

Chapters include comic panels, telegrams, and illustrations with speech bubbles, bringing the story to life in a gripping way. *Ages 9–13*


STEVE SHEINKIN
"Master of fast-paced histories." —The Washington Post
DIAMOND FEVER!
A True Crime Story in the Wild West
with comics and art by
JON CHAD

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

Would you have believed Philip Arnold and John Slack's story? Explain.

What would you have done with the diamonds if you were Roberts?

How does this story show that "truth is stranger than fiction"?

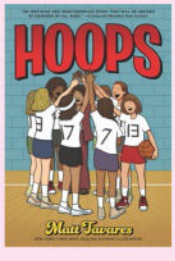
Why do you think so many people got caught up in Diamond Fever?

How do the comic panels and other features enhance the reading experience?

Do you plan to read more about this topic?

Find your next great read

If you liked…



Hoops
By Matt Tavares
This graphic novel, inspired by a true story, focuses on an Indiana high school girls' basketball team in 1975. Unlike the boys' team, they aren't given uniforms. They have to make theirs out of T-shirts and electrical tape! ***Ages 8–12***

You might like…

We Are Big Time
By Hena Khan, illustrated by Safiya Zerrougui
Another graphic novel inspired by a true story focuses on an all-girls', hijab-wearing basketball team in Wisconsin. This year, they aim to overcome a poor record with teamwork and self-confidence. ***Ages 8–12***

Guess the book this quote comes from

"I am the strongest girl in the world, remember that."

Hint: In 1945, the Swedish author published the now-famous book about a girl in red pigtails who has many zany adventures.

Answer: *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren. After Pippi's friend compliments a strongman from the circus, she touts her own physical prowess.

THIS WEEK'S AUTHOR

Steve Sheinkin

Award-winning author Steve Sheinkin is known for fast-paced nonfiction books for middle-grade readers. His book *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* won a Newbery Honor and was a National Book Award Finalist. Before becoming a full-time author, he wrote history textbooks.

What inspired *Diamond Fever*?

I had the idea for a diamond-mine story in my notes for about 15 years. I even pitched it to my publisher back then, and they agreed I would write about this true-crime diamond hoax story. But then it turned out I couldn't really find out that much about it because there are no books about it. It's great to be the first one to tell a story, but it also makes the job harder.

How did you research the book?

I took a trip with my son and drove around really rural parts of Wyoming and Colorado and did interviews at local museums and with ranchers to actually find the diamond mine.

Did you always want to be a writer?

Yes, but I didn't always want to write about history. That came later. Growing up, my brother and I thought we would be filmmakers. I was always determined to be a writer, and I've just tried a lot of different avenues in terms of fiction, nonfiction, comics, and screenplays.

What do you love about history?

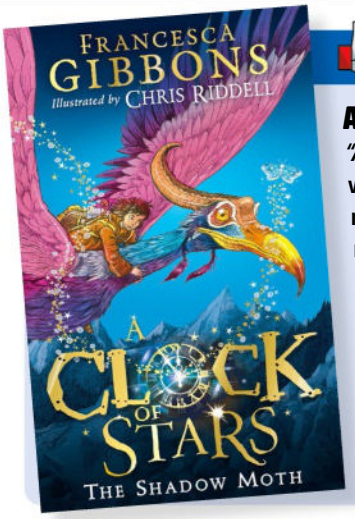
You get to pick an adventure and go down a rabbit hole with research. You can talk to people and visit places. That gets me excited.

What historical time period would you want to visit?

The colonial era of the Americas. I'm currently researching and writing a story about Captain Kidd, the famous pirate, and he lived in New York City in the 1690s. I would love to walk around the city at that time.

What do you enjoy about summer?

I love any kind of outdoor adventure. I especially like this time of year because it's so good for getting in a kayak and paddling on rivers and lakes. I'm also a big fan of cooking outside, including making pizza in an outdoor oven.



Reader recommends

A Clock of Stars *By Francesca Gibbons*

"*A Clock of Stars* is about two sisters, Imogen and Marie, who follow a silver moth through a door in a tree to a magical kingdom. Monsters called skret come out at night, so the sisters need to find shelter. They go to King Drakomor's castle, where they meet a prince named Miro. Imogen, Marie, and Miro want to stop the skret. They soon find out the secret reason why the skret are mad at the king. It's the first in a whimsical three-book series and very hard to put down!" Eloise, 10, Missouri

Do you have a book to recommend? We want to hear about it! With an adult's help, please send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

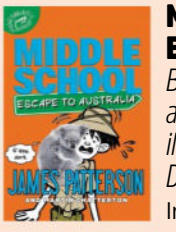
3 books set in Australia

Reading these stories will make you feel like you're there!

The Little Wave

By Pip Harry

Three fifth-graders—a city surfer, a quirky girl, and a rural boy—all connect through a school trip to a beach in Sydney, one of the largest cities in Australia. Although the heartwarming novel in verse deals with tough issues like grief and bullying, it's ultimately about the healing power of friendship. The book alternates between the three main characters' points of view. *Ages 8–12*



Middle School: Escape to Australia

By James Patterson and Martin Chatterton, illustrated by Daniel Griffo

In the ninth book in the famous Middle School series, Rafe wins the school art competition and the prize is a three-week trip to Australia. He's looking forward to beaches and sun. But being in a tiny beach town isn't at all what Rafe expected. *Ages 8–12*

Pie in the Sky

By Remy Lai

Eleven-year-old Jingwen and his mom and younger brother all immigrate to Australia, and the boys start school without knowing any English. Before Jingwen's father died, he dreamed of opening a cake shop called Pie in the Sky. After locating the family's recipes, the boys secretly bake cakes, pouring their grief into the process. The book is a graphic novel and prose hybrid. *Ages 8–12*

Find out more about *The Week Junior* Book Club and check out our previous titles at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF STEVE SHEINKIN; GETTY IMAGES

WOW! A woodpecker can drum a tree up to 12,000 times in a single day.

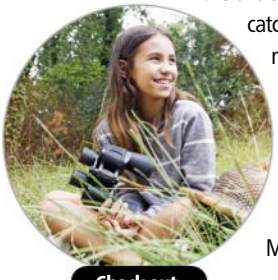
Give bird-watching a try

Discover the busy lives of our feathered friends.

A fascinating world of birds is just outside your door. You can find out more about the lives of these neighborhood nesters with the popular hobby of bird-watching. "Bird-watching is a treasure hunt that never ends!" says Luc Ward, an ornithologist (scientist who studies birds) and the author of *The Backyard Bird Watching Book for Kids*. "It's a hobby built on values like respect for nature and protecting endangered species." Here are tips for beginner bird-watchers.

Be bird-friendly

You can attract birds with native flowering plants and a shallow dish of clean water. You can also talk to your family about putting up a bird feeder filled with safflower or thistle seed or hanging a bird house (also called a nest box) where birds may lay their eggs. You could also put orange slices on a plate to draw birds. If you have a cat, keep it inside—cats are one of the biggest dangers to birds.



Check out new settings.

Get up early

The best time of day to see and hear many birds is the morning, when male birds call to defend their territory and attract mates. The American robin, a gray-brown bird with an orange-red breast, is found throughout most of the US and is often one of the first birds to sing in the morning. You may hear its whistles in a cadence that sounds like *cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up* and spot it hopping on the ground looking for insects.

Notice details

For any bird you see, take note of its features with your naked eye or binoculars. This will help you identify it. Is the bird's bill thick for cracking seeds or pointed for catching bugs? Are there identifying "field marks," like a stripe over the eye or a white flash in a tail? Observe the bird's behavior too. You may see a nuthatch creeping headfirst down a tree or a hummingbird flying backward. To learn more, borrow a bird guide from the library. The free Merlin Bird ID app can also be helpful.

Explore habitats

Different habitats, such as a stream, woods, or an open field, provide different food, shelter, and nesting spots. With an adult's help, plan to bird-watch in various settings. You can then share your notes on the eBird app, where Cornell University scientists use observations from bird-watchers to track and help protect birds.

Summer songbirds

See if you're able to spot one of these birds outdoors.

American goldfinch In the summer, the male (above left) is hard to miss. It's bright yellow with a black cap and wings. In winter, its feathers turn brown. Females are a more muted olive.

Eastern bluebird The male (middle) has a brilliant blue back and head and a red-brown breast, while females are more gray with blue in the wings and tail.

Western tanager Males are a stunning yellow (right) with a red head and black wings, and females are a dimmer yellow-green with dark wings.

STATE SYMBOL
Georgia is named the Peach State because of its significant peach production after the Civil War (1861–1865).

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using a knife or blender.

Whip up a peach-berry dream smoothie

Ingredients

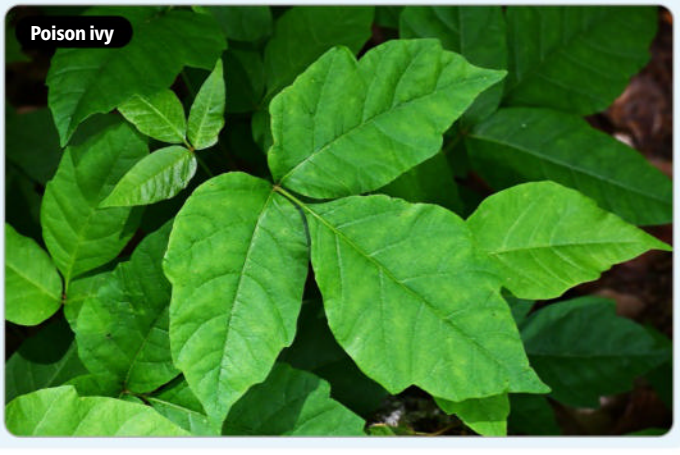
- 1 pound strawberries, stemmed
- 4 peaches, pitted
- 1 banana, peeled
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup crushed ice
- Peach and strawberry slices for garnish (optional)

Instructions

1. Wash and dry the strawberries and the peaches thoroughly.
2. Roughly chop up the strawberries, peaches, and banana.
3. Transfer fruit to a freezer-safe container and freeze for 2 to 3 hours or overnight. (This step is optional, but frozen fruit will give thicker results.)
4. Combine the strawberries, peaches, banana, Greek yogurt, and crushed ice in a blender. Puree until smooth.
5. Pour into glasses.
6. If you like, you can garnish the smoothies with fresh peach and strawberry slices. Makes about 3 to 4 smoothies.

LIFE HACK SPOT POISON IVY AND OAK

Poison ivy and poison oak are plants that can cause a very itchy skin rash when touched. You may come across them in a backyard or while camping or hiking, and it's smart to learn to spot them so you can avoid them. Poison ivy is marked by three broad, tear-shaped leaves. It grows as a low shrub, a ground cover, or a hairy, rope-like vine up trees and walls. Meanwhile, poison oak has leaves that resemble oak leaves. It grows on a vine or shrub in groups of three or more leaflets. An easy warning to remember: "Leaves of three, let them be." If you accidentally make contact with either plant, wash your skin right away with cool water and soap. Then let an adult know what happened.


Poison ivy

ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

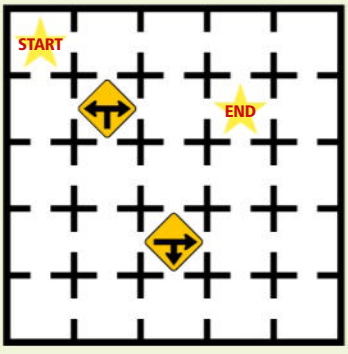
Word ladder

To change the word WAIT into the word HERE, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.

	W A I T
Disney's first name ▶	
Go for a stroll ▶	
Say something ▶	
Fairy ___ (story) ▶	
Steal ▶	
Not really real ▶	
Amount paid for a plane ticket ▶	
Tortoise's racing opponent ▶	
	H E R E

DETOURS

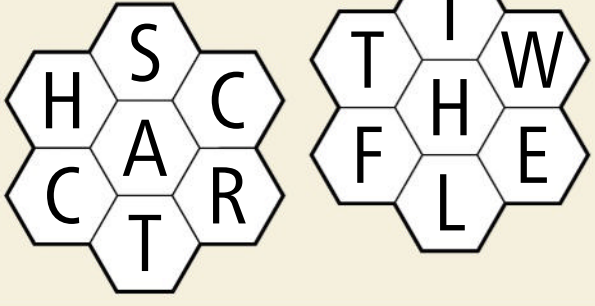
Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every single square without crossing itself. For squares with signs, you may only enter at the arrow's base, and you may only make a turn in the direction of an arrow shown.



STEPPING STONES

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Each figure hides a seven-letter word with just one vowel. To find each word, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once.



Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, –, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

		10				
14		2	=			
		7				
=					6	
			2	=	35	
				22		

Spot the difference

These two pictures of elephants appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Crossmath hint: The symbol above the 6 is a minus sign.

People are tickled pink to see her.

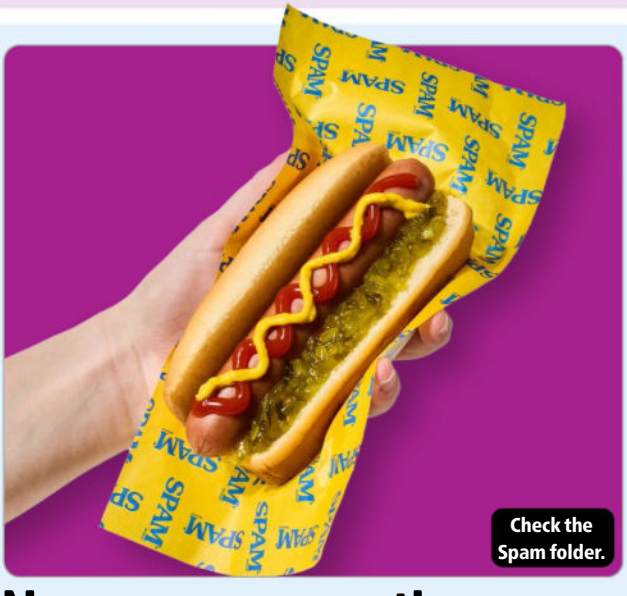
The tiny piglet with a big job

A little pig named Synergy is bringing smiles to the h3 Project, a crisis intervention organization based at Union Station in Washington, DC. The 7-month-old piglet, who belongs to the group's founder, has bright red nails and a pink cheetah-print harness. As she toddles through the halls of the train station, people love to take her photo. But she has a more important job: helping outreach workers connect with people experiencing homelessness. One client said, "She helps me when I'm down."

Verne the Patriot

A cracking achievement

The town of Luverne, Minnesota, has installed a 65-foot-tall landmark that is believed to be the world's tallest nutcracker. The statue, named Verne the Patriot, was built to entice people to take a detour off the highway and visit local businesses. Luverne has more nutcrackers than people, thanks to a resident who collected more than 7,500 of the figures. Inspired by the classic American character Uncle Sam, Verne is dressed in red, white, and blue, and his jaw can actually crack a nut—if you can find one big enough!



Check the Spam folder.

New sausage on the scene

The word "spam" is often used to describe unwanted messages, but it's also a brand of canned lunchmeat—and now the company that makes it has swapped the can for a bun. Hormel Foods is introducing the Spam Dog, a frankfurter made with many of the same ingredients as the original pork product. Hormel recommends grilling the sausage until it's crispy and dressing it up with relish, mustard, ketchup, or onions. One Spam fan called the new product a "dream come true."

Was this guitar fashioned from floorboards?

Craftsman turns ruins into riffs

An electric guitar has been made out of a most unusual material: old, burned floorboards from the famous Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, France. After a major fire tore through the church in 2019, it underwent extensive repairs. Oak boards from the floor in one of the towers were too damaged to be used in the restoration work—but not too damaged for stringed-instrument maker Jonathan Berg to craft them into a one-of-a-kind guitar instead. Is this story true, or are we stringing you along?*

*Real! Berg carved the guitar body from old floorboards and added electronic parts. He gave the instrument to the organization in charge of Notre-Dame's restoration. It will be played at events to benefit the cathedral.

GETTY IMAGES (3); HORMEL FOODS; BERG GUITARES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Editor's note

When the Spider-Man superhero character first appeared in a comic book in August 1962, I'm guessing the two people who imagined him onto the page (writer Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko) didn't realize what a long-lasting sensation they'd created. The web-slinging wonder went on to appear in many more comics plus live-action and animated TV series, video games, toys, books, and several successful film franchises. The animated movie *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* won an Academy Award in 2019, and the most recent live-action film, *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (rated PG-13), broke a major box-office record after it opened on July 31 (p5). It had the biggest North American opening weekend of any film in cinema history, with $360 million in ticket sales. If you see the movie (or any other blockbuster released this summer), we'd love to know what you think. Write to us anytime at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

The Lunchbox Fund

This organization helps children in need in Africa by providing school meals. It provides daily breakfasts and lunches to underserved communities, making sure the meals have essential nutrients that kids need to thrive. Since its founding, in 2005, the group has provided more than 101 million meals and helped more than 543,000 children. Find out more at thelunchboxfund.org. Lunchbox Fund

Selling plants to help others

Marlow, 9, and Sylvan, 11, New York

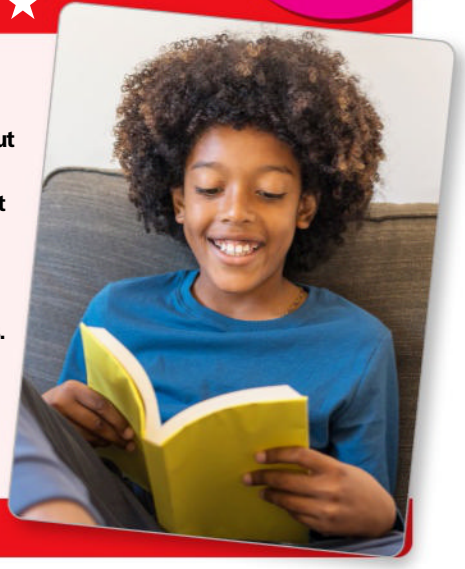
"We hosted a yard sale of plants and 3D-printed dragons to support the Rochester Deaf Kitchen (RDK), which helps deaf people access food at a time when federal assistance and other supports are being cut. We sold sunflowers, tomatoes, catnip, mint, squash, strawberries, houseplants, and seeds. We were able to donate $100 from the sale to RDK, which can support up to 500 people! This is the second year we have hosted a yard sale to benefit RDK. We want everyone to support the important work they are doing!"

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What are routinely broken but never fixed?
Eggs

Tell us your favorite book!

Now that *The Week Junior*'s 7th annual Summer of Reading program has concluded, we'd like to hear about what books you've enjoyed during your school break. Did you choose a title from our 50 Books Kids Love Most list? You can find the list at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub. No matter what book you enjoyed, take a photo of yourself holding the book and write a few sentences about why you'd recommend it to other kids. Have an adult email your photo and what you wrote to *hello@theweekjunior.com* with Favorite Book in the subject line. Some submissions may be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine. Happy reading!



THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I made this coconut crumb shrimp dish with my siblings. It tasted delicious!" Morgan, 8, California

"My pet tortoise Oxford and I liked the article about turtles and tortoises!" Nico, 11, Maine

"I got the *All About America* bookazine. I was so happy! Thank you so much, *The Week Junior*!" Charlotte, 7, Virginia

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Ms. Ellie Vick**

School Name: **Nashville Classical East**

"Ms. Vick is funny and encourages our class to push through hard tests and tricky work. She is always cheerful and positive. Ms. Vick always smiles at me when I walk into the classroom and asks me how my day is going. She makes my writing go above and beyond. Ms. Vick is an amazing teacher! Nobody can match her."

Eden, 8, Tennessee

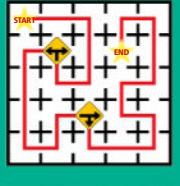
Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUBJECTS (5); GETTY IMAGES (2); THE LUNCHBOX FUND (2)

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Word ladder
WAIT
WALT
WALK
TALK
TALE
TAKE
FAKE
FARE
HARE
HERE

Stepping stones
scratch, twelfth



		10		
14	×	2	=	28
		7		−
		=		6
70	÷	2	=	35
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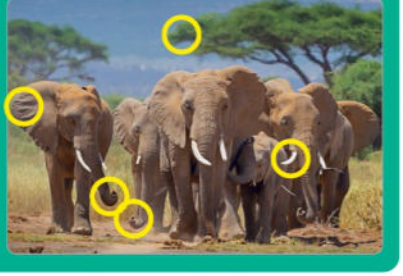

Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** a) Bread **2** True **3** b) Leonardo da Vinci **4** Los Angeles Queens **5** c) 1922 **6** False. It is lighter than bone. **7** b) 1870s **8** Tennis **9** c) Carrots **10** False. They are less expressive but more symmetrical. **11** Aquiry **12** b) Best Latin Song **13** True **14** a) Son Heung-Min **15** Verne the Patriot

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 What food did scientists recently bake using yeast that was found in mummified prehistoric remains?

a) Bread b) Doughnuts

c) Croissants

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? Andean leaf-eared mice live at a higher elevation than any other known mammal.

True ☐ False ☐

3 A new museum recently opened in Pueblo, Colorado, to highlight the work of which artist?

a) Claude Monet

b) Leonardo da Vinci

c) Vincent van Gogh

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 Which team won the first game played in the Women's Professional Baseball League?

5 In what year did seven US states enter into the Colorado River Compact?

a) 1902 b) 1912 c) 1922

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? Shark skeletons are made of cartilage, which is heavier than bone.

True ☐ False ☐

7 The book *Diamond Fever!* is set in which decade?

a) 1840s b) 1870s c) 1890s

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 Billie Jean King was a trailblazing athlete in what sport?

9

12

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

5

14

6

9 A recent study used which vegetables to test giraffes' math abilities?

a) Peas b) Green beans c) Carrots

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? Faces made by AI are more expressive but less symmetrical than real faces.

True ☐ False ☐

11 In the Amazon rainforest, scientists recently found hundreds of geoglyphs that were created by people from what ancient civilization?

12 Which of the following is a new Grammy Award category that will be presented starting in 2027?

a) Best Country Song

b) Best Latin Song

c) Best Rap Song

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 True or false? In a recent survey, a majority of adults supported banning cellphones in middle and high school classrooms.

True ☐ False ☐

14 Which soccer star was named the Most Valuable Player of the 2026 MLS All-Star Game?

a) Son Heung-Min b) Lionel Messi

c) Tim Ream

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 What is the name of the 65-foot-tall nutcracker that now stands in the town of Luverne, Minnesota?

THE WEEK Junior

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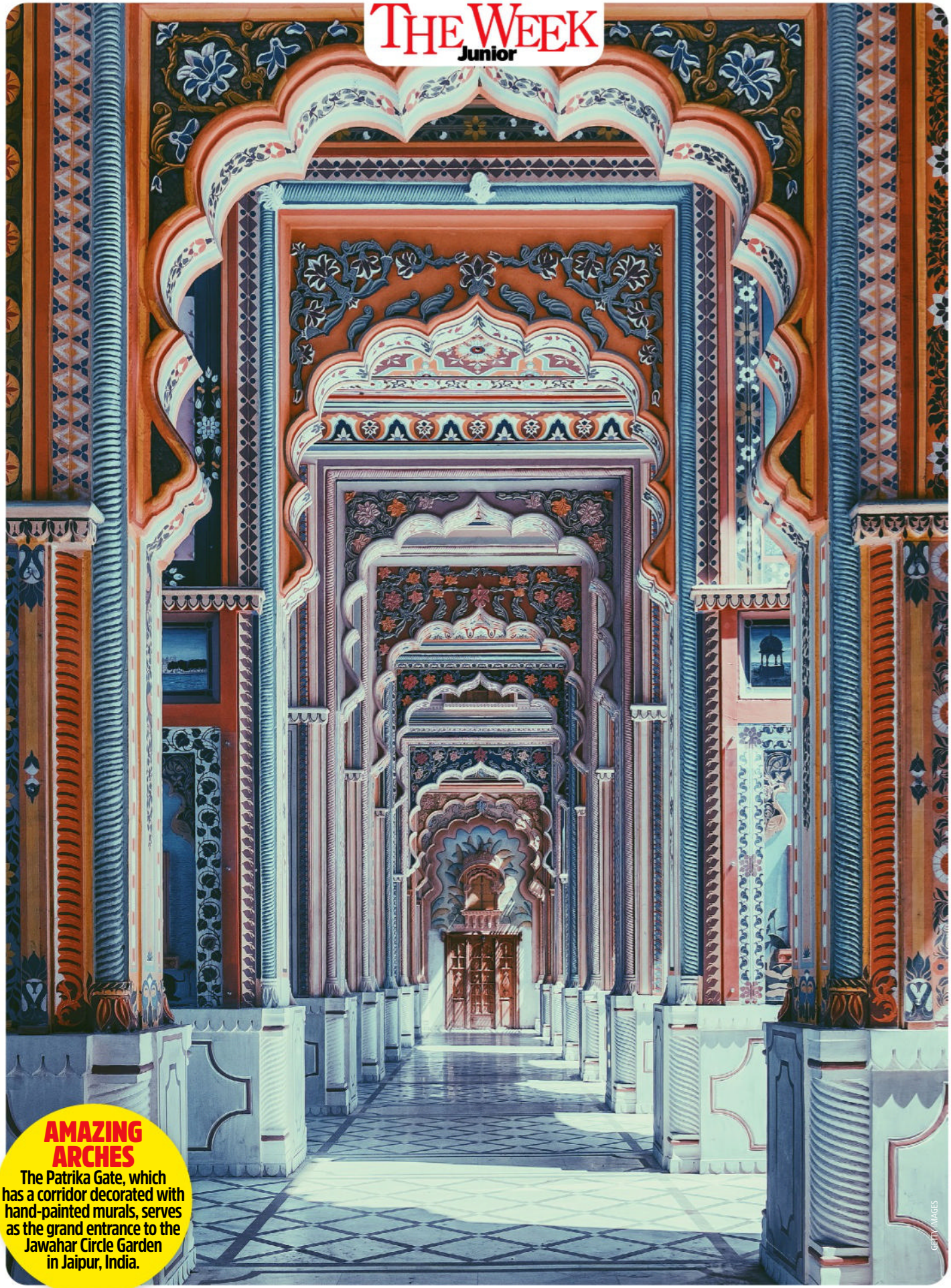

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The Patrika Gate, which has a corridor decorated with hand-painted murals, serves as the grand entrance to the Jawahar Circle Garden in Jaipur, India.

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